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THE DATE OF OUR GOSPEL

SAMUEL IVES CURTISS.

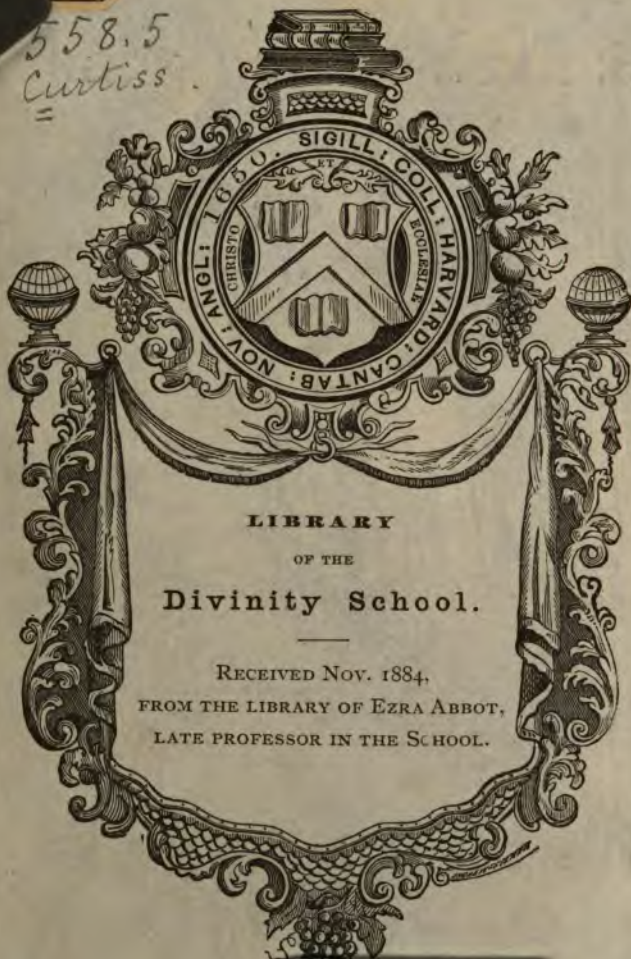
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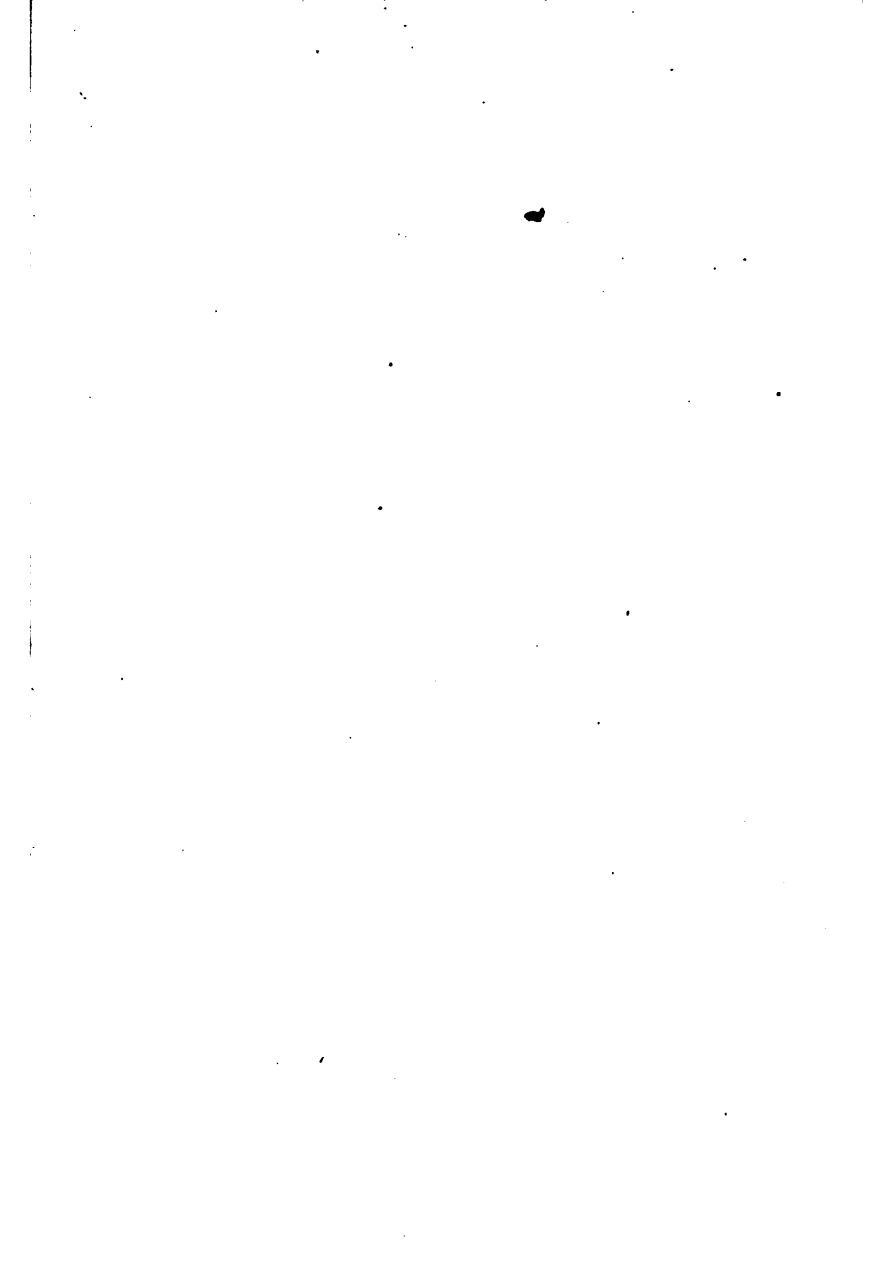
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THE  
DATE OF OUR GOSPELS

In the Light of the Latest Criticism.

BY

SAMUEL IVES CURTISS,

PROFESSOR IN CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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CHICAGO:  
F. H. REVELL, 148 and 150 MADISON STREET.  
1881.

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## PREFACE.

The following review of Judge Waite's book indicates the opinions of leading New Testament critics of almost every shade of religious belief with reference to the origin of the Gospels. On the one side is a lawyer, who late in life gave attention to these studies; on the other are men who have enjoyed every advantage for preparation in New Testament criticism, and who have devoted their lives to scientific investigations as to the time when the Gospels were composed. I leave the candid reader to judge whether sciolism or science is to determine the question respecting the date of the Evangelic Records.

I have also added a lecture, which is largely based on Norton's *Genuineness of the Gospels*, and which is designed to furnish a cumulative argument, showing what the admission that our Gospels were written in the last quarter of the second century really involves.

I trust that this little treatise may be of some help to every one who sincerely desires to know more as to the origin of the Gospels, and who is not conversant with the general literature of the subject.

SAMUEL IVES CURTISS.

CHICAGO, March 29, 1881.

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## PART FIRST.

Before entering upon the specific criticism of this book,\* some preliminary remarks are in place. I presume all will agree that there is need of a special training for the pursuit of every science, and that the more advanced the science becomes the greater the necessity of such a training. Before a man can attain eminence in any scientific department he must have mastered all the important discoveries in that department. It would obviously be absurd for a geologist to set himself up as an authority in geology who should be unfamiliar with the views of leading geologists during the last two decades, and who should quote the opinions of men in the last century to establish his positions, when an examination of recent authorities would have prevented him from wasting his time to no purpose. Still there are many who are led by curiosity to pursue studies for which they are unprepared for want of the right training. Their love of knowledge is commendable, and they are deserving of praise so long as they recognize the incompleteness of their inves-

\* *History of the Christian Religion to the Year Two Hundred.* By Charles B. Waite, A. M. Chicago: C. V. Waite & Co., 1881.

tigations. But when they attack established institutions and claim to be public teachers, it is right to try to convince them and the public that they are not scientists, but sciolists; and that the positions which they set forth with so much confidence are due to an ignorance of the subject.

There can be no doubt that Biblical criticism is as truly a science as that of geology or anthropology—a science which has occupied the close attention of many untiring investigators and brilliant students for the last hundred years. These men belong to all schools of belief. So far as they deserve the title of scientists, they are characterized with an ardent love of truth. They would rather make an admission which is unfavorable to them than carry a point by unfair means. Their opinions have been recorded, and although there are many differences among them, it is perfectly possible to ascertain what the consensus of New Testament criticism is; for example, whether critics generally agree that the books of the New Testament did not arise before the last quarter of the second century.

Now there are certain prerequisites which are absolutely necessary for the pursuit of such an investigation. Since German scholars have made such extensive contributions in this department, a familiarity with the German language is abso-

lutely necessary. To lack a knowledge of German is to incapacitate one for becoming a master in this department. This, however, is simply a medium. It is necessary besides to be familiar with the principles of historical and Biblical criticism. Without it the greatest industry will be misdirected. Furthermore, the student must have a complete knowledge of the literature of the subject, and of the best authorities. This is the last place where mere numbers are decisive. Not every book which may have been written on the subject is an authority. The leaders in this department have as clear and settled a reputation as the eminent astronomers or chemists, but they are perhaps less familiarly known to the general public. The last prerequisite which I notice is that of a judicial and unbiased mind. The question is, What are the facts? These must be understood and weighed without regard to the preferences of the writer.

I deem it important to dwell upon these points, not only that the public may see the grounds of my criticisms upon our author, but also that they may be in a position properly to estimate the many similar attempts which will be made in this direction.

Whether Judge Waite would claim the possession of these prerequisites I do not know. The

question is not whether he is an amiable gentleman, a person of literary tastes and culture, and of good common sense. He may possess all these qualities which commend one to the confidence of the public, and yet be totally unfitted to examine these questions and to pass a judgment upon them.

JUDGE WAITE'S METHOD.

Now, without any personal knowledge of the gentleman, I desire to point out plainly the defects of this very plausible book—I call it plausible because, without the least heat, he would seem to all who are inclined to doubt to establish his positions triumphantly. And yet I cannot discover a trace of one of the prerequisites which I have mentioned. He has not had the required training. He does not seem to be acquainted with German. He does not know the literature of the subject, although he has consulted so many books; and in this discussion, however excellent and impartial he may be upon the bench, he does not display an unbiased and judicial mind. Indeed he employs methods which are in vogue among advocates in making out a case, or what the Germans with reference to Baur and the Tuebingen school call tendency-criticism; that is, his entire investigation is predetermined by a theory. There is an obvious effort to disparage all testimony offered on the other side. This will appear

farther on in his treatment of the Apostolic Fathers; Eusebius, the Canon of Muratori, etc., are all disparaged. There seems to be a tendency, which is probably unconscious, to withhold evidence which might be prejudicial to him.

Unbelief is in every case given the benefit of the doubt. This may be a safe principle in criminal law, where it is esteemed better that nine guilty men should escape punishment than that one innocent man should suffer, but in a question where not only truth is at stake, but especially truth which concerns man's weal or woe, every argument in favor of the Christian system and its charter must be weighed with scrupulous care, and it seems to me that these, rather than infidelity, should have the benefit of the doubt.

Passing now to an examination of the author's work, I wish to have it understood in advance that I do not feel called upon to controvert, with much argument, positions which Mr. Waite never could or would have taken if he had been more conversant with the literature of this subject. I refer here especially to the evidence which he adduces for the priority of certain Apocryphal Gospels (pp. 128-221).

There are three points which he urges in his conclusion: "No evidence is found of the existence in the first century of either of the following

doctrines: The immaculate conception, the miracles of Christ, His material resurrection."

As these doctrines are plainly taught in the Gospels, the author can only establish his position by relegating them to the second century. This he seeks to do by external and internal arguments claiming that Luke arose 170 A. D.; Mark, 175; John, 178, and Matthew, 180. I need not say that scarcely any critics of eminence maintain such late dates, except the author of *Supernatural Religion*, who is the inspiration of so many agnostics in this country, and who can scarcely be ranked as a critic. The following is Hilgenfeld's criticism upon him, which is all the more significant, as he belongs to the most liberal party in Germany:\* "It cannot be denied that the author [i. e. of *Supernatural Religion*,] has taken great pains to look about carefully in old and new writings. One may also thankfully recognize many an excellent remark. But the author shows a similar partisanship against, as the orthodox show for the traditional authority of the Gospels, and it cannot be denied that, in many respects, he has transcended the proper limit. \* \* \* Such conduct is not calculated to retain and secure respect for criticism." The force of these strictures will appear when it is known that Judge

\* *Zeitschrift fuer wissenschaftliche Theologie*, Leipzig, 1875, vol. 18, pp., 583-584.

Waite, who is evidently influenced by *Supernatural Religion*, but cannot for a moment be compared with its author in learning, has taken positions which the author of *Supernatural Religion* is too wise to urge.

Let us now begin our investigation of Judge Waite's book with an examination of the propositions which he so confidently maintains in the conclusion, that there is no proof of the doctrine of the immaculate conception, of miracles, and of Christ's material (i. e. actual) resurrection in the first century. Our author sets our Canonical Gospels entirely aside as too late to have any bearing on this question. What evidence does he afford in support of these propositions? None whatever. Either the tradition is true, which maintains that the Gospels of Peter and of Paul are our Gospels of Mark and Luke, or it is false, as Judge Waite claims, and these Gospels are lost. If the tradition as to these Gospels is true, as many excellent critics hold, then we know these doctrines were taught, for they are contained in our Gospels; but if this tradition is false, then the assertion that it cannot be proved that these doctrines were held in the first century can be met with the counter assertion that it cannot be disproved. For if the documents named are not our Gospels, then they are lost, we have no clear record of

what was in them, and they cannot be cited on either side of the question. In that case, we should have to consider whether our Gospels were in existence at that period. Although the evidence down to a certain age is not strong when each argument is examined singly, yet we shall find, if we begin in the last quarter of the second century, and move back into the first century, that the critical evidence for the existence of the Gospels is very strong up to a certain point, and that beyond that point the moral evidence, when we combine all the arguments, is such as to satisfy every unprejudiced person. The only reason why scholars are so cautious in dealing with this subject is that unbelievers practically claim that all evidence which is merely circumstantial should be excluded. It is asserted that if we cannot trace the Gospels back earlier than the time of Justin Martyr (d. 165) by critical evidence we must stop there, we may not construct a cumulative argument from the circumstantial evidence which remains, carrying us back to the first century. Now, this course is obviously unfair where men are seeking after truth. It may be said that such circumstantial evidence would not suffice to establish a case in court. Granting this, for the sake of argument, does the fact that there is not sufficient legal evidence that certain events took

place disprove their actual occurrence? Have we not experienced many things in our lives of which we might not be able to furnish satisfactory evidence in a court of justice? Have they, therefore, never occurred? Might not, however, the statement of a citizen, who was a man of veracity and a public benefactor, be accepted, even in a court of justice, in regard to matters which he could prove only by circumstantial evidence, when all his other testimony was fully established? Now, this illustrates the condition of our argument in tracing the history of the Gospels backward from the last quarter of the second century. We have, as I have remarked, a good degree of certainty up to a given point, and beyond that a strong probability.

## DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM.

It is customary, however, for the critics, in beginning with the apostolic age, to assail each position until they reach a period where the arguments against them are impregnable. This is obviously unfair. We cannot rightfully expect any quotations from the Apostles who may have been living after the Gospels were written, since each was in possession of an oral Gospel.

Descending to the next period, that of the Apostolic Fathers, it must be remembered that it was not productive. These Fathers were over-

shadowed by the age that preceded them. They have left very few writings. Their minds were impressed more with persons and sayings than with documents. They naturally tended to use the same Bible which Christ and his Apostles had used, that is, the Old Testament, and while they felt their inferiority to the Apostles, yet, when they had occasion to quote the sayings and doings of Christ, in an age when manuscripts of the Gospels were not divided into chapters and verses, they were not likely to be anxiously literal in their quotations, since they had so often heard the oral Gospel, and the written Gospels had been prepared rather for the wants of the future church than for them. They had no occasion to quote the Gospels by the names of the different Evangelists, for the substance of the Gospel was already known to the churches to which they ministered. They had no special occasion for emphasizing the immaculate conception, Christ's miracles, or the circumstances of his resurrection. If they had laid special stress on those things it would have been natural for skeptics to have charged them with originating these doctrines. Hence their allusion to these facts are not at all inconsistent with the accounts in the Canonical Gospels.

According to Judge Waite's own admission "the first allusion to the immaculate conception is in the Epistles of Ignatius, A. D. 115." Does not the very fact that there is merely an allusion indicate that the immaculate conception was generally accepted as a fact which needed no proof? So, too, he says that "the first mention of the miracles of Jesus was in the Epistle of Barnabas, A. D. 71-132." Does that imply that the gospel account of miracles had not been previously in existence? Likewise he says that the material resurrection was taught by Justin Martyr. On the other hand he seeks to prove that Paul in holding the doctrine of a spiritual resurrection knew nothing of the facts of Christ's resurrection. This seems absurd. For Paul had no occasion to enter into the particulars of Christ's resurrection. The fact that he simply mentions that Christ was raised does not at all prove that he did not know the manner as described in the Gospels. Indeed what he says respecting Christ's resurrection in no way contradicts the narrative given in the Gospels, but rather presupposes it. Hence it follows that the evidence which Judge Waite adduces in support of these three positions in regard to the immaculate conception, miracles, and the actual resurrection of Christ is purely negative. It fails to prove his propositions. It

simply amounts to this, that there were three Gospels in the first century, which he thinks were entirely different from our first three Gospels. These Gospels are lost. Notwithstanding our ignorance as to their contents Judge Waite thinks that they did not teach these doctrines. I need not dwell upon the transparent weakness of such an argument.

#### APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS.

Our Canonical Gospels, according to our author, did not exist in the first century. He claims that all seeming references to them in the Apostolic Fathers are to be explained away as derived from what the church has designated Apocryphal Gospels, from which our Gospels in the last quarter of the second century were derived. He says that Marcion preceded our Luke, and that Justin Martyr knew nothing of our Gospels. I shall not waste any ink or paper to prove that the Protevangelium, the Gospel of the Infancy, the Acts of Pilate, etc., in their present forms as known to us, and as quoted by Judge Waite, arose at a later period than our Canonical Gospels. While I might be amused to see into what a trap he has fallen, I feel a sincere compassion for a man who doubtless thinks with many others of his admirers that this is one of the most convincing parts of his book. A knowledge of the original sources

and the literature of the subject would have saved him from this pitiful blunder. I simply refer to Professor Lipsius's article on the *Apocryphal Gospels*, in Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, London, 1880, vol. ii, pp. 700 sq.; and Holtzmann, *Apokryphen des Neuen Testaments*, in Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexikon*, Leipzig, 1869, vol. i, pp. 170 sq. As neither of these articles are by orthodox men, or by those who have the slightest bias toward orthodoxy, they are calculated to inspire confidence in persons of every shade of belief or disbelief. Both are authorities; Meyer's *Konversations-Lexicon* says of Professor Lipsius of Jena, that he is one of the most eminent scholars in Germany.

## LUKE AND MARCION.

Still further, a knowledge of the course of criticism and of the latest authorities would have kept Judge Waite from claiming that Marcion's Gospel preceded that of Luke. The opinion that Marcion's Gospel was not a Gnostic recast of our Luke's Gospel, but that Luke's Gospel was derived from Marcion, was held for a time years ago by some Germans, and more recently by the author of *Supernatural Religion*, but the weight of scholarship is overwhelmingly in favor of the priority of Luke. Even the author of *Supernatural Religion* has been compelled, in the last edition

of his work, London, 1879, to make the following admission, which nullifies his entire argument as to the priority of Marcion. He says (vol. ii, p. 138):

“In the earlier editions of this work we contended that the theory that Marcion’s Gospel was a mutilated form of our third Synoptic, had not been established, and that more probably it was an earlier work, from which our Gospel might have been elaborated. Since the sixth edition of this work was completed, however, a very able examination of Marcion’s Gospel has been made by Dr. Sanday which has convinced us that our earlier hypothesis is untenable, that the portions of our third Synoptic, excluded from Marcion’s Gospel, were really written by the same pen which composed the mass of the work, and, consequently, that our third Synoptic existed in his time, and was substantially in the hands of Marcion.”

The hypothesis which found favor with Baur and the Tuebingen school thirty-five years ago has long since been given up in Germany, even by Baur himself in the main. Ritschl, who recorded his adherence to the theory in 1846, gave his recantation five years later as follows:\* “I see that the hypothesis put forth by me, that Marcion did

\* See Weiss, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch ueber die Evangelien Markus and Lukas*, Goettingen, 1878, p. 240.

not change the Gospel of Luke, but that his Gospel is a preliminary step to the Canonical Luke, has been refuted by Volkmar and Hilgenfeld. Whoever reflects upon the exceeding one-sidedness with which Hahn has defended the traditional view will know how to excuse me for being led by him to the contrary one-sidedness" (i. e. that the author of Luke's Gospel made use of Marcion's).<sup>\*</sup> Says Reuss of Marcion: "He took his material principally from Luke as the least Judaizing \* \* \* in fact his books were castrated editions of single apostolic writings." And Hilgenfeld remarks:† "Among the Germans it will not pass for progress that he [i. e., the author of S. R.] is determined to consider the Gospel of Marcion as independent from that of Luke." If the author of *Supernatural Religion* is compelled to yield this point, Judge Waite cannot any longer maintain his position with reference to Marcion, except among those who are so ignorant in regard to the matter, or so prejudiced, that they will not see.

\* Compare Lipsius, in Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. ii, p 715; Holtzmann, in Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexikon*, vol. i, pp. 178-179; *Die Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften Neuen Testaments*, Braunschweig, 1874, vol. i, p. 254,

† *Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaftliche Theologie*, Leipzig, 1875, p. 584, in a criticism of the sixth edition of *Supernatural Religion*.

Our author has followed *Supernatural Religion* in finding that Justin Martyr does not refer to our Canonical Gospels.

This is ground which has been searched again and again by the most critical minds in Europe. Starting with America, and with a New Testament scholar who has a distinguished continental reputation, we find Professor Ezra Abbot, D. D., LL.D., of Harvard College, in his work on *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, Boston, 1880, maintaining in a masterly way that Justin Martyr used all our Canonical Gospels. Crossing over to England, we find the same position ably argued by Dr. Wescott, on the *Canon of the New Testament*, London, 1875; by Sanday, *The Gospels in the Second Century*, London, 1876; by Dr. E. A. Abbot, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, New York, 1879, pp. 816 sq., with some qualifications in regard to John's Gospel, which are met by our Professor Abbot. Passing to Germany, and taking a look at the standard critical New Testament introductions, we find that Bleek, and his editor, Mangold, \* maintain that Justin Martyr was acquainted with our four Gospels; that Reuss † says, in regard to the char-

\* *Enleitung in das Neue Testament*, Berlin, 1875, pp. 271, 371.

† *Die Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften Neuen Testaments*, Braunschweig, 1874, Sec. 294, rem.

acter of his citations from the Gospels, that they refer, so far as we can compare them with our texts, mostly to Matthew, but also some things which are only found in Mark and Luke are expressly cited, and the latter as from the disciple of an Apostle; and Hilgenfeld \* remarks: "Was in Justin's Evangelien . . . stand, fuehrt bereits ueber die beiden Evangelien des Matthaeus und des Marcus hinaus. Es unterliegt keinem Zweifel dass er auch das Lucas-Evangelium gebraucht hat. Sogar der Gebrauch des Johannes-Evangelium wird schwer abzuweisen sein." "That which stood in Justin's Gospels leads us out already over the two Gospels of Matthew and Mark. There is no doubt that he also used the Gospel of Luke. It will be hard to deny even the use of John's Gospel."

There can be no question, then, that the very best critics in America, England and Germany, as the result of the latest and most searching investigations, are agreed that Justin made use of the three Synoptical Gospels, and that most of them recognize, with varying degrees of assent, his use of John's Gospel. Here again Judge Waite, in denying this secondary relation of Justin to our Canonical Gospels, builds upon the sand.

\* *Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Leipzig, 1875, pp. 66 and 67.

## EUSEBIUS.

The constant tendency of our author's book is seen in his treatment of the Fathers and of Eusebius. Whenever there is any danger that their testimony may cast a barrier in the way of his arguments, he seeks to disparage them. Such a course may be natural enough for one who is accustomed to the usages of a court-room, but it is carried to such an extreme, especially in the case of Eusebius, as to cast grave reflections upon the methods of one who claims to be seeking after the truth. We look in vain in any modern critical works for such a contemptuous handling of the Fathers.

Granted that they were credulous like the men of their age, is all their testimony to be rejected on that account?

Old Scaliger, who died in 1609, is summoned from his grave to repeat an exploded slander against Eusebius, that "no writer has contributed more to Christian history, and no one is guilty of more mistakes." This is but a specimen of the way in which the Judge conjures up the shades of the past for the delectation of sciolists, who are ready to discuss any theme in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, with the assurance that they are perfectly competent to settle the question. But it is absurd to quote these ancient au-

thorities when scholars in the last decade have made new discoveries in the same fields, and can speak with authority. I know of no critics of any repute, and I have consulted many, who call in question the honest intent of Eusebius' statements. Semisch, in Herzog and Plitt's *Real Encyklopaedie*,\* in commenting on Eusebius' silence with regard to the bad things in Constantine's character, remarks that his fault lay in this, and not in a material falsification of them, and afterwards adds: "His character for historical fidelity cannot in the main be denied in that which is handed down." The following estimate of Eusebius, by Bishop Lightfoot, one of the most careful English scholars, is taken from Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*,† where, after speaking of the enormous labor incurred in preparing the church history and defending him from the aspersions of Gibbon, he says: "The writer contents himself with condemning the sins and shortcomings of Christians [which Lightfoot says are denounced in no measured language] in general terms without entering into details, and declares his intention of confining himself to such topics as may be profitable to his own and future generations. This treatment

\* Leipzig, 1879, vol. 4, pp. 394-395.

† London, 1880, vol. 2, p. 324, sq.

may be regarded as too great a sacrifice to edification. It may discredit his conception of history, but it leaves no imputation on his honesty. Nor, again, can the special charges against his honor as a narrator be sustained. There is no ground whatever for the surmise that Eusebius forged or interpolated the passage from Josephus relating to our Lord, quoted in H. E. i., 11, though Heinichen (iii., p. 623 sq., Melet. ii.) is disposed to entertain the charge. Inasmuch as this passage is contained in all our extant manuscripts, and there is sufficient evidence that other interpolations (though not this) were introduced into the text of Josephus long before his time, no suspicion can justly attach to Eusebius himself. Another interpolation in the Jewish historian, which he quotes elsewhere (ii., 23), was certainly known to Origen. Doubtless, also, the omission of the owl in the account of Herod Agrippa's death (ii., 10) was already in some texts of Josephus (Ant. xix., 8. 2). The manner in which Eusebius deals with his very numerous quotations elsewhere, where we can test his honesty, is a sufficient vindication against this unjust charge. \* \* \* *As regards the canon of Scripture, indeed, he takes special pains; he lays down certain principles which shall guide him in the production of testimonies; and, on the whole, he adheres to those principles with fidelity.* [The italics are mine.]

I close with the following quotations from Meyer's *Konversations-Lexikon*.\* "His main work, the Church History, written between 324 and 326, contains a rich collection from the public archives, church libraries, and private collections, increased through traditions, inquiries from those who had been participants in that which had taken place, or which they themselves had experienced, and although in many respects wanting in criticism, and unpartisanship, and evenness of treatments, yet in general bearing the character of fidelity and credibility."

There can be no doubt, therefore, that when Judge Waite charges Eusebius with forgeries, and claims that his testimony ought not to be taken except as supported by others, he is guilty of using arguments which, in the judgment of modern criticism, cannot stand.

## FAUSTUS.

Judge Waite quotes Faustus, a Manichaeon, who had a discussion with Augustine, which has been preserved in the writings of the latter, as saying: "Besides, as we have proved again and again, the writings are not the production of Christ or of His Apostles, but a compilation of rumors and beliefs, made long after their departure, by some

\* Leipzig, 1875, vol. 6, p. 446.

obscure semi-Jews, not in harmony even with one another, and published by them under the name of the Apostles, or of those considered the followers of the Apostles, so as to give the appearance of apostolic authority to all these blunders and falsehoods." Our author supposes that Faustus must have made this boast good in some of his writings. But of this there is no evidence. He never establishes this assertion anywhere, but affirms that the Paraclete (i.e., the Holy Ghost) teaches him what to receive and what to reject. Augustine retaliates on him by asking him what proof he has that Christ sent his Paraclete, and says: "You reply that you find the proof in the Gospel. You do not accept the Gospel, and you say that it has been tampered with. Will you first accuse your witness of corruption, and then call for his evidence? To believe him when you wish it, and then to disbelieve him when you wish it, is to believe nobody but yourself. Where, then, will you find the proof required to show that it is from the Paraclete that you have learned that the Gospels were not written by the Apostles?" In another place he is inclined to claim that a passage in Romans is spurious because Paul asserts that the Son of God was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. He simply concedes that Paul wrote the passage because Augus-

tine will not hear of anything being spurious in his writings. Augustine responds to such denials of the genuineness of the Scriptures, as follows: "In your inability to find a reason for not receiving what is written in the New Testament, you are obliged, as a last resource, to pretend that the passages are not genuine. This is the last gasp of an heretic in the clutches of truth." From this it is evident that Faustus, instructed by the Paraclete (i. e., the Holy Ghost), as he claimed, rejected all passages in the Old and New Testaments which were contrary to his doctrines as spurious, without the slightest evidence. This is all the more evident when we go back to Celsus, who is quoted by Origen. According to Judge Waite, he did not write *The True Word*, in which he refers to the New Testament books, until early in the third century. Unfortunately for Mr. Waite, however, Dr. Keim, who belongs to the most liberal German school, and who made a very careful investigation of the subject, Celsus' *Wahres Wort*, Zurich, 1873, sets the date in the year 177 or 178 A. D.; see Smith & Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.\*

When pushed with arguments which he cannot answer he does not, like Faustus, urge the spuriousness of the Gospels, as he might well have

\* London, 1877, vol. 1, p. 436.

done if Judge Waite's theory were true, that they were not written before the last quarter of the second century. His refuge, like that of so many skeptics of the present time, is in interpolations. He is the forerunner of Judge Waite and his compeers, who assume that the supernatural elements and all the unpalatable doctrines were interpolated. The following is his charge and Origen's answer:

"Certain Christian believers \* \* \* have corrupted the Gospel from its original integrity, to a three-fold, and four-fold, and many-fold degree, and have remodeled it, so that they might be able to answer objections."

To this Origen replies: "Now I know of no others who have altered the Gospel save the followers of Marcion, and those of Valentinus, and I think, also, those of Lucian. But such an allegation is no charge against the Christians, but against those who dared to trifle with the Gospel."

Taking the quotation from Faustus in connection with that of Celsus, it will be seen that their charges of forgery and interpolation rest on mere assertions, and apply to those parts of the New Testament which they do not like.

#### THE OLD VERSIONS.

A further illustration of Judge Waite's tendency-criticism is seen in the date which he

assigns to the old versions. He says (p. 304): "The four Gospels were written in Greek, and there was no translation of them into other languages earlier than the third century." The best and latest authorities assign the old Latin version to about the middle, or not later than the end of the second century. Hilgenfeld says the New Testament was translated into Latin in the second century. Wescott assigns the date of that translation to the year 170 A. D. Bleek, Tregelles, Scrivener, Sanday, all assign it to the middle of the second century. Roensch holds that it could not have been made later than 200 A. D. Of course these dates are very unfavorable to his hypothesis that the Gospels first arose in the last quarter of the second century.

## MURATORIAN FRAGMENT.

Another illustration of the unvarying tendency of our author's argument is in his attitude toward the Muratorian fragment, respecting which, after speaking very depreciatingly of it, he says: "It is supposed by some to have been written in the second century. \* \* \* There are eminent critics, however, who hold that the original was not written earlier than the third century. The document itself, a production of about the eighth century, cannot be looked upon as a very satis-

factory evidence of the condition of the church in the second century." Now, the fact is that the most eminent New Testament scholars in America, England, and Germany, with a few exceptions, hold that the Muratorian fragment was written in the last quarter of the second century (most setting the date at about 170-180 A. D.) Some of them are: Professor Ezra Abbot, of Harvard College; Dr. E. A. Abbott, Canon Westcott, W. A. Sanday, Credner, Wieseler, Bleek, Reuss, Hilgenfeld, and many others.

Even the author of *Supernatural Religion* has to admit that the mass of critics, thirty-two in all, are against him, while only eight can be found who assign a later date, and these, with the exception of Donaldson, merely hold that the fragment dates from the end of the second or beginning of the third century. This is a case where the author of *Supernatural Religion* and Judge Waite show that they "have few equals in their power of resisting evidence opposed to their prejudices."—Professor Abbot. In view of the investigations of the most distinguished scholars, the Muratorian fragment is a very important witness for the canonical character of our Gospels in the last quarter of the second century.

#### THE MANUSCRIPTS.

Again, Judge Waite shows his bias and his ignorance in regard to manuscripts, when he ex-

presses his surprise that no autographs of the Gospels have come down to us, and that none of the existing manuscripts of the Gospels date further back than the fourth century. The following quotations from Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*,\* will tend to set this matter in its true light:

"As the New Testament far surpasses all other remains of antiquity in value and interest, so are the copies of it yet existing in manuscript, and dating from the fourth century of our era downward, far more numerous than those of the most celebrated writers of Greece or Rome. Such as have been already discovered and set down in catalogues are hardly fewer than 2,000; and many more still linger unknown in the monastic libraries of the East. On the other hand, manuscripts of the most illustrious classic poets and philosophers are far rarer and comparatively modern. We have no complete copy of Homer himself prior to the thirteenth century, though some considerable fragments have been recently brought to light which may plausibly be assigned to the fifth century; while more than one work of high and deserved repute has been preserved to our times in only a single copy."

The following remark is made in *Smith's Dic-*

\* Cambridge, 1874, pp. 3-4.

*tionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*,\* in regard to the manuscripts of Livy's (b. 59, B. C. d. 17 A. D.) History: "No manuscript of Livy has yet been discovered containing all the books now extant. \* \* \* \* Of the first and third decades we have manuscripts as old as the tenth century; those of the fourth [decade] do not ascend higher than the fifteenth century." And Max Mueller, in his *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*,† states that "but few Sanskrit manuscripts are older than 1000 A. D."

#### MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When we consider that the earliest copies of the New Testament may have been written on the perishable papyrus, which was chiefly employed for ordinary purposes in the first century‡ we need not be surprised that the sacred autographs have perished. Indeed, when we remember that a portion of the precious Sinaitic manuscript was consigned to a waste-basket as useless by the ignorant monks of St. Catharine, who had previously burned two baskets full of bits of old manuscripts, and was only rescued by Tischendorf's timely visit, it

\* Boston, 1870, vol. 2. p. 795.

† New York, 1873, p. 148.

‡ See Scrivener, pp. 23-24.

need not surprise us that we have so few very ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures.

## CHRIST AND KRISHNA.

Before leaving the subject of the external evidences adduced by Judge Waite in proof of his position that the Gospels were not written before the last quarter of the second century, I should perhaps notice the striking parallels which are drawn between Christ as portrayed in the existing Gospels of the Infancy and the account of Krishna in the *Bhagavat Purana*. Before discussing this subject I wish to have it understood that, to my mind, it is no impeachment of the truths of the Bible that we find traditions of the creation, the fall, and the deluge which, even in their grotesque forms, reminds us of the accounts in Genesis, and which may be reminiscences from one ancestral house. The fact that other nations besides the Hebrews confessed their sins and sought forgiveness does not disprove the divine nature of that doctrine. David is not less inspired because we find in the Chaldean literature passages which remind us of the penitential psalms. Lenormant gives the following :\*

“God, who knowest that which is secret, be gracious.

\* *Die Magie und Wahrsagekunst der Chaldaer*, pp. 66-67.

## THE DATE OF OUR GOSPELS.

Goddess, who knowest that which is secret, be gracious.

O my God, my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins.

O my Goddess, my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins."

These are only "some solitary fragments of pure gold from a heap of rubbish."—Max Mueller. But the parallels between Christ and Krishna have evidently risen in a different way. Either the Gospels of the Infancy have borrowed certain elements from the account of Krishna, in the *Bhagavat Purana*, as Judge Waite claims, or the *Bhagavat Purana* has borrowed from Apocryphal Gospels.

Now, unless it can be shown, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the *Bhagavat Purana*, in its present form, has essentially the same form as it had before the Gospels of the Infancy appeared, Judge Waite's claim, and that of all his kith and kin, breaks down.

But Judge Waite cannot establish his position; he adduces Colonel Kennedy, who, in the quotation given, simply argues the matter as a question of probabilities. Mr. Wilson, in *The Vishnu Purana*,\* says: "The inference deduced from the discrepancy between the actual form and the older definition of a Purana, unfavora-

\* London, 1840, p. 6.

ble to the antiquity of the extant works generally, is converted into certainty when we come to examine them in detail; for although they have no dates attached to them, yet circumstances are sometimes mentioned or alluded to, or references to authorities are made, or legends are narrated, or places are particularized, of which the comparatively recent date is indisputable, and which enforce a corresponding reduction of the antiquity of the work in which they are discovered." Unless these things can be satisfactorily explained, and it can be proved that the Puranas have not received any modern elements since the Christian era, Judge Waite's assumption, as I have stated, must fall to the ground. All the authorities accessible to me corroborate the above statement in regard to the comparatively recent origin of the Puranas. Max Mueller, in his *Chips from a German Workshop*,\* says:

"What is commonly called Hindu mythology is of little or no avail for comparative purposes. The stories of Siva \* \* \* \* Krishna, etc., are of late growth, indigenous to India, and full of wild and fanciful conceptions. But while this late mythology of the Puranas," etc. Again, in his *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*,† he remarks:

\* New York, 1870, vol. 2, p. 75.

† New York, 1879, p. 149.

"We must carefully distinguish between the Puranas, such as they now exist, and the original Purana, a recognized form of ancient tradition. \* \* \* \* Totally distinct from this are the Puranas. So late as the time of Gaimini no importance was attached to the Puranas, for he does not even refer to them in his "System of Mimamsa."\*

The following quotation from Weber,† doubtless gives the prevailing view of German scholars as to their age: "The jealousy of the priestly families who claimed the pre-eminence for this or that form of worship and temple, and who fought one another with malignant hatred, contributed not a little to the formation of sects. The Puranas belong to this time of religious divisions, \* \* \* which in their present form hardly extend beyond the eleventh and twelfth centuries of our era." Compare Meyer's *Konversations Lexikon*,‡ where it said of them: "Along with these reminiscences of primitive times they show the peculiarities of a modern tendency," etc.

There seems, therefore, to be no doubt that the *Bhagavat Purana* may have derived those partic-

\* Compare the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 9, pp. 245, 247; vol. 15, p. 844 sq.

† *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1857, vol. 1. p. 296.

‡ Leipzig, 1878, vol. 13., p. 341.

ulars in which the portraiture of Krishna corresponds to that of Christ through the medium of one of the Apocryphal Gospels. Without laying any weight upon the tradition given by Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, B. V., 10, that Pantænus visited the Indies and found on his arrival that Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had already preached there and left the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew, since the India referred to here is generally supposed to have been Arabia, it is not difficult to suppose that some form of the Gospel of the Infancy, which existed both in Syriac and Arabic translations, may have given a coloring to the myths respecting Krishna. Indeed, this is far more reasonable than the theory that the Apocryphal Gospels have gathered only these things from the myths of Krishna, since they do not exhibit any traces of a hero who is represented as reveling in licentiousness and mischief, for when we come to the person of Christ there is no similarity in the portraiture.

#### INTERNAL CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS.

Leaving the discussion of Judge Waite's external history of the Gospels, not because I have by any means indicated all his false hypotheses, but for want of time, I turn to consider very briefly his criticisms on their internal character. His strictures upon them are as histories. Hence he

dwells upon their alleged discrepancies and their incompleteness. It must be evident, however, that he judges them from a false standpoint. As their name Gospels implies, they are not histories, but glad tidings, good news, for particular classes of people. They differ as much from complete biographies as historical discourses do, which are designed to teach specific lessons. Their authors were by no means anxiously concerned to secure a verbal agreement. If that had been the case it would have been a very simple matter for each Evangelist to have so given the inscription on the cross that there should have been no deviation; but would not our skeptics have been ready to accuse them of collusion? Would not four persons who should repeat the same story word for word in court excite suspicion? It is not within the range of human power for different individuals to report the same events and discourses, experienced and heard in a series of years, alike or in the same order. Shall we, therefore, deny that the facts reported ever happened? Certainly, if we had only one Gospel, skeptics would claim that it was not true because it lacked confirmation. If all the Gospels related the same facts in the same order, it would be argued more strenuously than at present, that one had been derived from another. But as the case now stands variations in the ac-

counts, which under ordinary tests would not be regarded as fatal to the substantial accuracy of the narrative, are urged as reasons for doubting everything of a supernatural character. If, however, we once admit the claim of Scripture that God became flesh and dwelt among us, we have no difficulty in regard to the immaculate conception, the miracles, or Christ's actual resurrection.

Indeed, as regards the miracles, I cannot conceive how a compassionate Redeemer could resist the cries for help which were directed to Him as He walked among men. Now, the fact that there has been no anxious attempt to conform one Gospel narrative to another in every particular is, as I have already suggested, an indication of genuineness, especially as it has been ably shown by Canon Wescott\* and others that each Gospel was designed to meet the wants of a specific class, Matthew being written originally for the Jews, Mark for the Romans, Luke for the Hellenists, and John for the Alexandrians, and so the Gospels came to have a universal character adapted to every age and civilization. Much is made of the differences between John and the first three Gospels, not only as to the facts related, but also with reference to the style of Jesus' addresses. But the difficulty

\* *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, London, 1875, p. 209, sq.

disappears when we remember that Matthew, Mark, and Luke present the scenes of Christ's Galilean ministry among the rude peasantry who were less acquainted with the law than their southern brethren, and who needed simple and direct teaching; on the other hand, John sets forth mainly Christ's Judean ministry among those who were conversant with the law and were accustomed to elaborate discussions. The ministry of one year implied by the Synoptists, considered by themselves, does not exclude the three years' ministry which is derived from John's Gospel, for the four taken together supplement each other. I shall not enter here into the difficult subject of the genealogies, or of the enrollment. They have been explained sufficiently, considering our want of data, to satisfy every seeker after the truth who does not wish to find a stumbling-block in them. Canon Farrar, who confesses that he would be perfectly ready with his views of inspiration to admit that they involved historical inaccuracies if necessary, receives the records in regard to them as true.

#### INFLUENCE OF ROMAN HIERARCHY.

I pass now to consider the alleged influence of the Roman hierarchy upon the four Gospels. I shall not attempt to controvert Judge Waite's

preposterous assumption, but merely to show that the claim that Victor played the part of a sovereign pontiff in excommunicating the non-conforming Asiatic churches who differed with him in regard to the celebration of Easter, and that Irenaeus supported his supremacy, cannot be established. Giessler says:\* "With the rejection of Montanism in Rome was probably connected Victor's opposition to the Asiatic mode of celebrating Easter. He called upon the bishops in Asia Minor (about 196) to adopt the customs of the West on this point, and after their refusal, when he had been assured of the assent of the bishops in Palestine, Pontus, Gaul, and Corinth, broke off church communion with them. Several bishops, however, and Irenaeus himself among them, admonished him on account of his too great haste; peace was again restored, and both parties continued undisturbed in the observance of their own customs till the council of Nice." It is clearly evident that a Roman bishop who had to yield to the protests of his brethren was not absolute, and that Irenaeus in denouncing his course, as he does in no measured language, is by no means the subservient creature to the Church of Rome that Judge Waite would have us believe.†

\* *Church History*, New York, 1857, vol. 1, pp. 196-97.

† Compare, Schaff's *History of the Christian Church* New York, 1869, vol. 1, pp. 375, 428.

In closing it will be seen that Judge Waite's assumption that there is no evidence of the doctrine of the immaculate conception, of miracles, and of Christ's material (i.e. actual) resurrection in the first century, is, even according to his theory, unfounded, because he asserts that the Gospels then existing are lost and we are not acquainted with their contents. I have shown that the consensus of criticism is that Justin Martyr used at least three of our Gospels, and according to Professor Abbot and other able scholars the fourth, that Marcion had Luke, that the Muratorian fragment mentions the last two Gospels and implies the other two; that the old Latin version contained the four Gospels. Here, then, is positive proof, in the opinion of all critics, except those who are blinded by prejudice, that the three (and perhaps four) Gospels were in existence in the time of Justin Martyr. This result has been secured by the most careful sifting of evidence. Thus far the case is not argued on probabilities, but is as strong and positive as anything can be under the circumstances. From every point the argument is strengthened. I quote for illustration from Sanday:\* "Irenaeus (who speaks of the four Gospels,) as we have seen, was writing in

\* *The Gospels in the Second Century*, London, 1876, p. 326.

the decade 180-190 A. D. But his evidence is surely valid for an earlier date than this. He is usually supposed to have been born about the year 140 A. D., and the way in which he describes his relations to Polycarp will not admit of a date many years later. But his strong sense of the the continuity of church doctrine and the exceptional veneration that he accords to the Gospels seem alone to exclude the supposition that any of them should have been composed in his own lifetime."

## JUSTIN MARTYR.

Returning, then, to Justin Martyr, the weight of critical evidence shows that, at the latest in the year 146 or 147 A. D., he appeals to Gospels which critics maintain were coextensive with our first three, and as Professor Abbot and other eminent critics hold, with the four. These, as Professor Abbot shows, Justin Martyr mentions eight times as "Memoirs by the Apostles;" four times he calls them "the Memoirs" simply; once "Memoirs made by the Apostles, which are called Gospels;" once, when he cites apparently from the Gospel of Luke, "Memoirs composed by the Apostles of Christ and their companions." Once again, when he speaks of a fact only mentioned, so far as we know, in the Gospel of Mark, he designates as his

authority "Peter's Memoirs," which, supposing him to have used our Gospels, is readily explained by the fact that Peter was regarded by the ancients as furnishing the materials for the Gospel of Mark, his traveling companion and interpreter. "On the day called Sunday," he says, "all who live in the cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the Memoirs by the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished the President admonishes and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." From this it appears that the "Memoirs by the Apostles" were held in as great reverence as the Prophets of the Old Testament; and that in the year 147 they occupied the same pre-eminent position which Irenæus assigned to the Gospels forty years later; hence, irrespective of the linguistic evidence furnished by the critics, we have good reason for believing that the Memoirs of Justin, which he once calls Gospels, are the same as our Canonical Gospels, since, as Mr. Norton says: "We cannot suppose that writings such as the Memoirs of which Justin speaks, believed to be the works of Apostles and companions of Apostles, read in Chirtian churches, and received as sacred books of the highest authority, should immediately after he wrote have fallen into neglect and oblivion, and been superseded by

another set of books." Up to this point, it seems to me that we can pretty clearly trace the presence of the Canonical Gospels. Earlier than this the arguments derived from the quotations found in the Apostolic Fathers taken alone would not prove the contemporary existence of our Canonical Gospels, still the evidence furnished by some passages in Barnabas (130 A. D.) and in Clement of Rome (95-100 A. D.), which correspond to passages in our Gospels seem to be confirmatory; and taken in connection with the fact that the Memoirs, or Gospels, which were held in such reverence in the churches at the time of Justin, could not have suddenly secured that pre-eminence, is important. We are thus borne on toward the end of the first century, and can now better appreciate the various dates assigned to our four Gospels by eminent scholars.

## JOHN.

Taking up the Gospel of John as the youngest, we find that the progress of criticism has been that of a retreat towards the beginning of the second century. While Baur and Schweigler of the Tuebingen school assigned it to the years 160 and 170 A. D., they were beaten back so that Zeller and Scholten adopted the year 150; Hilgenfeld, at last compelled to admit its use by Justin Martyr, retreats to a time between 130 and 140;

Renan assigns it to 125 or 130, and Keim, in the first volume of his *History of Jesus of Nazareth*, confidently placed it between 110 and 115, but seeing the dangerous consequences of this admission, he maintained, in his last volume of the same work that it arose in the year 130. "Schenkel assigns it to A. D. 115-120." In this connection Professor Abbot, from whom I have derived these statements, positively says: "It is the uniform tradition, supported by great weight of testimony, that the evangelist John lived to a very advanced age, spending the latter portion of his life in Asia Minor, and dying there in the reign of Trajan, not far from A. D. 100. How could a spurious Gospel of a character so peculiar, so different from the earlier Synoptic Gospels, so utterly unhistorical, as it is affirmed to be gain currency as the work of the Apostle, both among Christians and the gnostic heretics, if it originated only twenty-five or thirty years after his death, when so many who must have known whether he wrote such a work or not were still living." It will then be seen that the probability that the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel is very strong indeed. See on this point an admirable critical treatise on *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, by Professor Abbot, Boston, 1880.

With reference to Luke, the antiquated hypothesis of Schleiermacher\* with reference to the composite character of Luke, which Judge Waite quotes in the main with approval, has long since been rejected. Weiss remarks that the genuineness of this Gospel is assured by the external witness without exception. Baur and Zeller hold that it arose 110–130 A. D. Hilgenfeld, Keim, and Volkmar assign it to the year 100 A. D. Godet says that it can be referred back as far as the period from 64 to 80 A. D., and Weiss holds that it arose between 70 and 80.†

#### MARK.

Mark, which is regarded by Weiss as the primitive Gospel, was written, according to Hitzig, 55–57 A. D. Schenkel before 60; Volkmar, 73; Koestlin, who distinguishes between a primitive Mark (65–70) and our Gospel, before 110; and Keim, 115–120. The best authorities, with Weiss and Meyer, hold that it arose before the destruction of Jerusalem.

\* *Krit. Versuch ueber die Schriften des Lukas I*, Berlin, 1837.

† Compare Weiss *Kritisch. Exegetisches Handbuch ueber die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas*, Goettingen, 1878, and the introduction to Godet's excellent and cheap *Commentary on Luke*, New York, 1881.

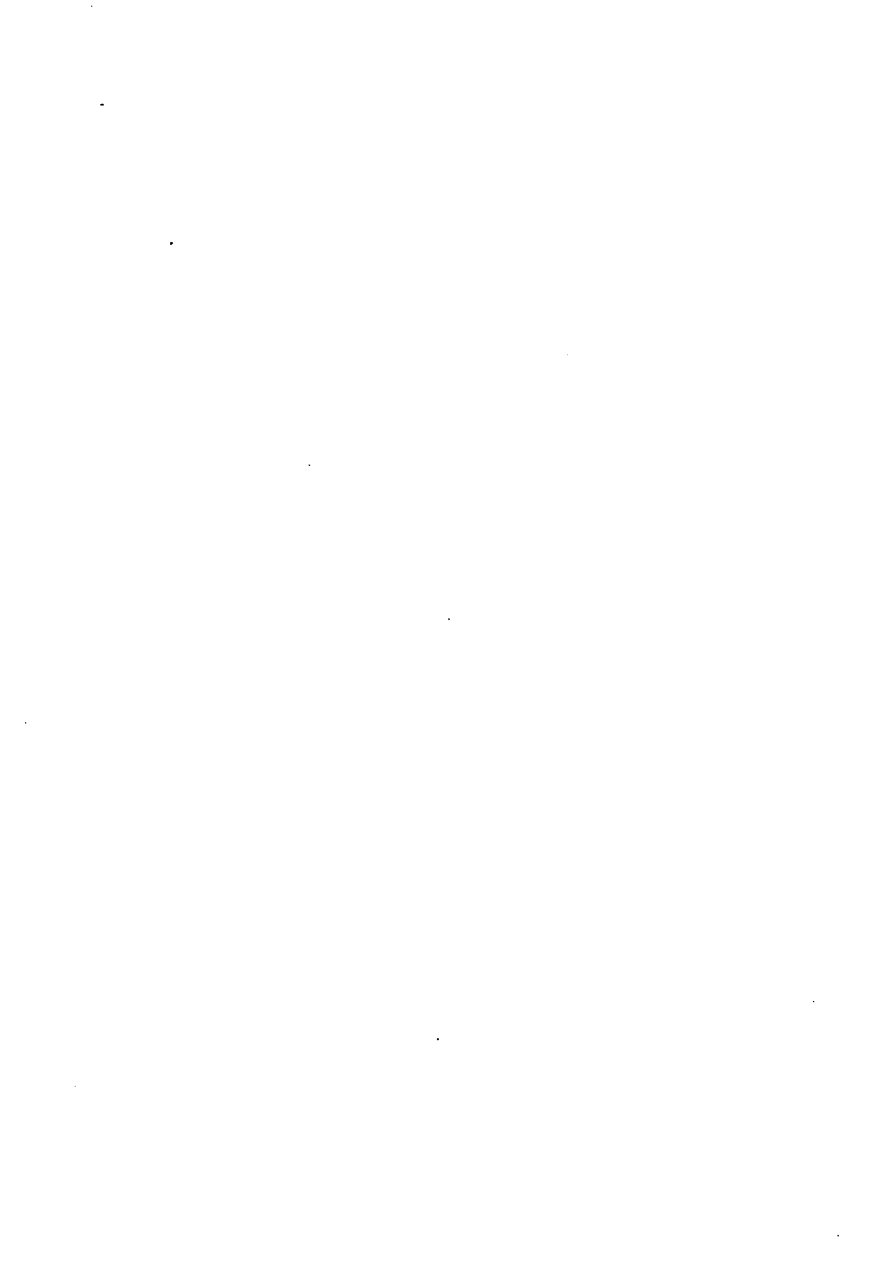
## MATTHEW.

Matthew was written, according to Baur, about 130. Hertwig, however, says\* that in his opinion he received no support. Volkmar places it between 105 and 110, Schenkel after, and Keim before, 70. Hertwig says that it was certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem, between 60 and 70, and this latter date is the one adopted by sober criticism.

While regarding Judge Waite's work as a complete failure from a critical point of view, and as years behind the times, except so far as he leans upon the author of *Supernatural Religion*, I have no doubt that the book will do many great injury on account of its apparent learning and candor. Those, however, who appreciate the weight of the testimony which Christianity affords in its historical existence, as confessedly the greatest and most beneficent power in those lands which have been visited by the Gospel, will not be shaken by a work which they may not be in a position to refute, while the Christian scholar, who is familiar with the ground may well smile at the assurance with which uncritical and absurd hypotheses are set forth. This entire class of literature will only

\* *Tabellen zur Einleitung ins Neue Testament*, Berlin, 1872.

lead true Christian scholars to examine the foundations more carefully and to revindicate those glorious doctrines which skeptics, from Celsus down to the present time, have assailed in vain.



## PART SECOND.

### WHEN WERE OUR GOSPELS WRITTEN ?

Within the past few months the assertion has been made with great persistency, in various publications and in the daily press, that our Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not written before the last quarter of the second century. I have already shown in the foregoing review that even those modern critics who do not accept the supernatural character of the Gospels are constrained, almost to a man, on the basis of scientific and elaborate investigations, to place the origin of our Gospels, with a few exceptions in regard to the Gospel of John, either in the latter part of the first century, or in the first quarter of the second. You can see how this admission gives the anti-supernaturalists trouble, but they cannot help themselves. The evidence is against them. It is not my purpose to weary you with evidence which can only be appreciated by specialists. I shall simply try, so far as I may be enabled, to present a cumulative argument. A single wire may be broken, but when many are twisted into cables, and properly secured on each side of a river, they furnish an adequate support over which

thousands of passengers are daily carried with entire security. This may serve to illustrate the strength of the arguments for the genuineness of the Gospels when combined. If I fail to gather them together it will not be because they do not exist, but for want of power to make them apparent.

Let us now examine the statement that our Gospels were not written before the last quarter of the second century. It is admitted that they were in existence at that time. What does this admission involve?

#### DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY.

At a time when it is conceded by all, except by a notorious blasphemer, who, in such matters, is a profound ignoramus, that the Gospels were in existence, the Church had extended even beyond the confines of the Roman world. It stretched from the Euphrates to the Straits of Gibraltar, from France, and probably Britain and Germany, to Africa, including Palestine, Syria, Greece, and Italy. Gibbon,\* who is very moderate in chronicling the spread of Christianity, estimates that at the end of the third century there were six millions of Christians, or one twentieth of the population of the Roman world. This being the case, it certainly would not be extravagant to suppose,

\**Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Ch. ii.

with Norton, that at the close of the second century there were three millions. But even this estimate seems very low when we read such testimonies as those of Pliny and Tertullian.

The heathen Pliny, who had been sent by Trajan to govern the provinces of Pontus and Bythinia, early in the second century, writes as follows: "I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared to me a subject proper to consult you about; especially on account of the number of those [the Christians] against whom accusations are brought. For many of all ages, of every rank, and of both sexes likewise, have been and will be accused. The contagion of this superstition has made its way not in cities only, but in the lesser towns also, and in the open country. It seems to me that it may be stopped and corrected. It is certain that the temples which were almost deserted begin to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities are revived after a long intermission. Victims likewise are everywhere sold, of which, till lately, there were very few purchasers."\* This quotation clearly shows that at this time more than one in forty, a proportion on which this estimate is based,† were Christians in Pontus and Bythinia. And

\* *Plinii Epist.*, Lib. X, Epist. 97.

† This estimate is made on the supposition that the population of the Roman Empire was then 120,000,000.

there is no reason to believe that Christianity was less diffused in other communities where it had secured a foothold.

Tertullian, who had been an eminent jurist, who was one of the most learned men of his time, and who was converted to the faith which he had ridiculed, after he was thirty years of age, bears this testimony to the spread of Christianity about the close of the second century:

"We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything that is yours, cities, islands, castles, free towns, council-halls, the very camps, all classes of men, the palace, the senate, the forum. We have left you nothing but your temples. \* \* \* If we, such a multitude of men, had broken away from you, retiring into some remote corner of the world, your government would have been covered with shame at the loss of so many citizens, whoever they might be. \* \* \* Without doubt you would have been terrified at your solitude; at the silence and stupor of all things, as if the world were dead. You would have had to look about you for subjects."

But you say that this language is rhetorical and exaggerated. Granted; yet there must have been a foundation for these statements, of which the evidences were before the very eyes of his opponents. Tertullian had too keen a mind to make

assertions which were utterly false and would have covered him with derision. We may then consider that we are warranted in accepting the estimate that in the last quarter of the second century there were in the Roman Empire at least three millions of Christians.

But although there were so many, they had not been united under one head. While holding the same fundamental doctrines, for in this survey I do not at all take into account the heretics, they were widely separated from each other by differences of race, language and religious views. There had not yet been a general council. Even rating the facilities of communication which the Roman government had at its command at the highest, the difficulties in the way of an interchange of views between churches which were under the ban are almost beyond our comprehension in these days of rapid transit; and yet, that most careful scholar, Professor Abbot, of Harvard College, boldly declares, as unquestionable, that "Our present four Gospels, and no others, were received by the great body of Christians as genuine and sacred books during the last quarter of the second century;"\* in other words, our Gospels were received as genuine by three millions of Christians, widely separated from each other by forests, mountains,

\**Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, Boston, 1880, p. 13.

and seas, speaking different languages and holding different shades of religious belief, in the last quarter of the second century.

#### RECEPTION OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

This proposition is established by the following considerations:

*First.* The weight of critical authority goes to show that an old Latin version containing the Gospels was current in the last quarter of the second century.

*Second.* The same date, although without equal positiveness, is assigned by many of the foremost scholars to the Syriac version of the Gospels.

*Third.* All critics of eminence, about forty in all, with possibly two or three exceptions, concede that the Muratorian fragment, which mentions the Gospels as belonging to the New Testament Canon, originated, at the latest, in the last quarter of the second century.

*Fourth.* Irenæus, who was born between 125 and 130 A. D., after spending his youth in Asia Minor, became bishop of Lyons, in France. He, as well as the other Church Fathers, whom I shall cite, was a man of rare education and intelligence. Norton in his admirable work on the *Genuineness of the Gospels*, says: "The passages cited by him [Irenæus] from the Gospels \* \* \* fill about eleven closely printed folio col-

umns; while the passages cited from all the Old Testament fill about fifteen such columns. He appeals to the Gospels continually and quotes them as undoubted authority for the faith of the great body of Christians, with the same confidence which might be felt by any writer of the present day. They were books in general circulation and commonly studied." \* Irenæus himself says: "All the Scriptures, both Prophecies and Gospels, are clear and without ambiguity, and may be heard in like manner by all, though all do not believe."†

Is it conceivable that Irenæus would have made such constant appeals to the Gospels, placing them on an equality with the Old Testament, if they had not been generally received by the church?

*Fifth.* Clement, of Alexandria, who, after his conversion, traveled in Greece, Italy, Syria, and Palestine, seeking religious instruction, and who, about the year 190 A. D., became the head of the catechetical school at Alexandria, made such frequent quotations from the Gospels that his extant works are of great value in settling the true text. He not only claims in one passage that "the Scriptures which we [Christians] have believed are

\* *The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*, Cambridge, 1846, vol. i. p. 134.

† *Lib.* ii. c. 27.

confirmed by the authority of the Omnipotent," but proposes "to evince from them in opposition to all heretics, that there is one God and almighty Lord, clearly proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets, and together with them by the blessed Gospel."† Again he disposes of a reputed saying of Christ quoted by certain heretics from an apocryphal book. by remarking: "In the first place, we have not that saying in the four Gospels which have been handed down to us." Such language and such a constant use of the Gospels presupposes that they were in common use among the Christians when he wrote.

*Sixth.* Tertullian, who was born at Carthage, 160, A. D., writes as follows: "Among the Apostles, John and Matthew form the faith within us. Among the companions of the Apostles, Luke and Mark renovate it."§ Again, in writing to heathens in defense of Christians, he says; "Examine the words of God, our literature, which we are far from concealing, and which many accidents throw in the way of those who are not of our number." \* \* In this very connection he quotes two passages from these Scriptures, one from the Gospels and the other from the Epistles, with reference to the

† *Stromata*, B. iv. c. 1.

§ *Adversus Marcionem*, Lib. iv.

\* \* *Apologeticus*, § 31.

duties of Christians in respect to civil government.

From this it seems that in Africa the Gospels were not only accessible to believers, but also to unbelievers.

*Seventh.* Last, but not least, we have the testimony of Celsus, who wrote, according to the best authorities, about 177 or 178 A. D. It was the object of this brilliant heathen controversialist to destroy Christianity by argument. Mr. Norton shows conclusively that his attacks were based on our four Gospels. In speaking of the remains of Celsus, which have been preserved by Origen, he says:

"It appears from these extracts that Christians, in the time of Celsus, had histories of our Savior which they believed to have been written by His disciples, and the genuineness of which was not controverted by him. Without mentioning their authors by name, he frequently quotes and refers to them. It has been observed with truth that an abridgement of the history of Jesus, corresponding to that in the Gospels may be found in the remains of his work. \* \* \* . He calls Christ Himself a carpenter. He speaks of His miracles, of His having cured the lame and blind, fed a multitude on a few loaves, and raised the dead; and argues upon the supposition that these facts really

took place. \* \* \* The numerous objections of Celsus to the accounts received by Christians respecting our Savior are always made to accounts found in the Gospels. \* \* \* He nowhere implies the existence of any narrative respecting Christ as believed by Christians, which is not related by the Evangelists. But in attacking these books, that is, our present Gospels, Celsus evidently considered himself to be undermining the foundations of Christianity; to be attacking books regarded by Christians as of the highest authority, as the authentic records of the history of their master, composed or sanctioned by His immediate disciples. We have, then, the evidence of an enemy of our religion, that the Gospels were thus regarded by the Christians of his age."\*

#### CHEAPNESS OF MANUSCRIPTS.

It has been shown by Norton and others through quotations from classic authors that ordinary manuscripts could be produced very cheaply, so that one whom Juvenal describes, about the close of the first century, as exceedingly poor was an owner of books.† His contemporary, Martial,‡ says that one of his books, containing two hundred and seven-

\* *Evidences, etc.*, vol. i. pp. 143-146.

† *Sat.* iii. ~~186~~.

‡ *Lib.* *Epig.* 3.

ty-two verses, could be had for two sestertii, that is about seven cents, and it will be remembered that in the Acts of the Apostles\* we have an account of the burning of magical books by converts, which were valued at about \$7,500, showing that if they possessed such manuscripts before their conversion, they could certainly afford to purchase the Gospels after it. It is probable that when Christians could secure a copy of the Gospels for a few cents that a great many copies must have been scattered among three millions of Christians. Now we are asked to believe that four new Gospels, differing from those which had been previously accepted by the church, were received without the slightest objection or debate in Syria, in Africa, in Italy, and France, among Christians so diverse in customs, in language, and in their religious views; that they were received by Christians who were neither held together by a supreme pontiff nor a general council, and that they were accepted by some of the most eminent scholars of the age, without discussion, and without the least ripple of excitement being occasioned by this momentous change. Other matters of inferior importance have been transmitted to us from that period, but there is nowhere even a hint of the adoption of these new Gospels. Is such a hy-

\* xix. 19.

pothesis in view of the facts credible? Would not the introduction of our Gospels for the first time in the last quarter of the second century be a greater miracle than the miracles of the New Testament, which unbelievers wish to banish from our Bibles? Is anything, after all, so credulous as unbelief? Let a man who knows nothing about Biblical criticism, the veriest quack, who has been all his days a lawyer, write a book; and there are at least some who will ask if the foundations have not been moved? Just as though the investigations and conclusions of learned men through all the centuries were to be overturned by the crude hypotheses and absurd investigations of one, concerning whose theory as to the date of the Gospels, the most eminent scholar in New Testament criticism, in Leipzig, Germany, says in a postal of recent date: "*Derjenige welcher die Evangelien in das letzte Viertel des zweiten Jahrhunderts verlegen will ist ein unwissender Narr*,"—"The one who desires to transfer the Gospels to the last quarter of the second century is an ignorant fool." Of course the writer of these words had no idea that they would be published, and so expressed his undisguised contempt for a theory which has, so far as I am aware, *not a single supporter* among German scholars.

But to return to the assertion that the presence

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of the Gospels in the last quarter of the second century simply indicates that they were first written at that time. The absurdity of this proposition has been clearly put by Mr. Norton, who has been quoted with approval by Professor Abbot in the following passage:\*

"About the end of the second century the Gospels were revered as sacred books by a community dispersed over the world, composed of men of different nations and languages. There were, to say the least, sixty thousand copies of them in existence;† they were read in the churches of Christians; they were continually quoted and appealed to as of the highest authority; their reputation was as well established among believers from one end of the Christian community to the other as it is at the present day among Christians in any country. But it is asserted that before that period we find no trace of their existence; and it is therefore inferred that they were not in common

\* *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, Boston, 1880, pp. 17-18.

† Norton, in view of the trifling cost of the Gospels, says: "I shall not, therefore, I think, be charged with over-estimating, if I suppose that there was one copy of the Gospel for every fifty Christians. \* \* \* This proportion, however, will give us sixty thousand copies of the Gospel for three millions of Christians." — *Genuineness of the Gospels*, pp. 51-52.

use, and but little known, even if extant in their present form. This reasoning is of the same kind as if one were to say that the first mention of Egyptian Thebes is in the time Homer. He, indeed, describes it as a city which poured an hundred armies from its hundred gates; but his is the first mention of it, and therefore we have no reason to suppose that before his time it was a place of any considerable note."

#### CHRISTIANITY FOUNDED ON FACTS.

We have already seen the absurdity of supposing that our four Gospels could have been introduced for the first time in the last quarter of the second century, and no records have been left of their introduction. Such a supposition must also be reconciled with the fact that at that time Christianity in its chief characteristics, as dependent upon the Gospel record, was a system based on certain facts. There is, indeed, no more remarkable phenomenon in history than the origin and growth of the Christian church when explained on natural principles. Its founder died a shameful death. One would have supposed, humanly speaking, that this would have been sufficient to seal its doom. A party numbering five hundred thousand, who had joined a false Messiah, Bar Cochba, one hundred years after Christ's death, were stamped out with their leader by the Roman power, and

not one disciple of that deceiver, so far as I know, remains. But the death of Christ, although at first such a terrible shock to His disciples, seemed to be the beginning of new power to His followers. In a few weeks thousands were converted in a day, and that too although the doctrines preached humbled the pride of men in the dust, and went counter to their natural inclinations. They relinquished every worldly advantage. Covered with pitch they blazed in the gardens of cruel Nero. They were thrown to the lions. Tender maidens were gored to death by infuriated bulls. Special tortures were devised, and they were massacred until their persecutors became weary, and still they increased, so that at the end of the second century they numbered, as we have seen, more than three millions, including persons of every rank and men of the highest education. I will not ask whether there is anything supernatural in such a history. I simply ask did they or did they not know in whom they believed? Did they or did they not know anything definite in regard to his history? Had they or had they not any well-defined doctrines? And if they had, is it probable that these facts and doctrines would be easily forgotten? Had they or had they not Gospels which had become the sheet-anchor of their faith through long years of agony, and are we to

suppose that they relinquished the dear old Gospels after a hundred years for new and strange ones?

The martyr's Gospels would be the dearest Gospels to the church, and Christians would almost as soon think of plucking out their right eyes as of relinquishing books which had been baptized in the blood of their loved ones.

#### JUSTIN MARTYR'S GOSPELS.

But we are not left to such suppositions, strong as they may be. We have positive proof that Justin Martyr, who was born about the end of the first century, and wrote the treatise from which we quote in 147 A. D., was acquainted with our Gospels, which he once designates by that name, but usually calls *Memoirs of the Apostles*, or *Memoirs of the Apostles and their Followers*. It will be seen at once that the force of our argument carries us to an earlier age than that of Justin Martyr. For it is utterly inconceivable that the Gospels mentioned by Irenæus are different from those spoken of by Justin Martyr. We are not, however, left to this argument, for critics are substantially agreed that Justin Martyr was familiar with our Gospels. It has been urged that he never mentions them by name, as Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, but then it must be remembered that he was arguing in one treatise with a heathen, and in another with a Jew. They neither knew nor

cared for the opinions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, nor could they well understand the term Gospels, which was not current among them. It was therefore most natural that Justin should allude to the Gospels as memoirs, or memorabilia of the Apostles. It has been objected too that Justin's quotations are not exact. This failing was not uncommon among the early Church Fathers; it is not uncommon in this day of concordances and of chapters and verses. In order to verify a reference in the Gospels it would be necessary for him to hunt in a roll where there were no divisions into chapters and verses, or even into words. A man might be excused, therefore, for quoting passages in the Gospels according to the sense, especially when it was not necessary that he should give the exact words to his opponents. Now in view of these facts, the following citation from Justin Martyr, is very significant. He says:

"On the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the Memoirs by the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits.\*

It will be seen from this quotation that the Memoirs of the Apostles, which in another place he calls the Gospels, occupy the same honorable position as the Old Testament; that they are pub-

\* *Apolog.*, I. C. 67.

licly read in the churches as our Gospels were in the time of Irenæus, and that the circumstances in the case do not admit of their having been different books from those which forty years later were so extensively circulated in the churches. Such a supposition is in the highest degree improbable when we remember, as Norton suggests, that—

“Irenæus was in the vigor of life before Justin’s death; and the same was true of very many thousands of Christians living when Irenæus wrote. But he tells us that the four Gospels are the four pillars of the church, the foundation of the Christian faith, written by those who had first orally preached the Gospel, by two Apostles and two companions of Apostles. It is incredible that Irenæus and Justin should have spoken of different books. We cannot suppose that writings, such as the *Memoirs* of which Justin speaks, believed to be the works of Apostles and companions of the Apostles, read in Christian churches and received as sacred books of the highest authority, should immediately after he wrote have fallen into neglect and oblivion, and been superseded by another set of books. The strong sentiment of their value could not so silently and so unaccountably have been transferred to other writings. The copies of them spread over the world could not so suddenly

and so mysteriously have disappeared that no subsequent trace of their existence should be clearly discoverable. When, therefore, we find Irenæus, the contemporary of Justin, ascribing to the four Gospels the same character, the same authority, and the same authors as are ascribed by Justin to the *Memoirs* quoted by him, which were called Gospels, there can be no reasonable doubt that the *Memoirs* of Justin were the Gospels of Irenæus.”\*

## GOSPELS BEFORE JUSTIN.

But we may assert more than this. The nature of our argument goes to show that Gospels which were received as inspired, when Justin wrote in the year 147, and which were publicly read in the churches, must have originated long before his time. He could not have regarded these books with such reverence had he known that they originated twenty-five years before, or had he not regarded them as written by Apostles and companions of Apostles; indeed, he speaks of them as “*Memoirs composed by the Apostles of Christ and their companions.*” Now, in this connection, it must be remembered, as I have remarked, that Justin was born toward the close of the first century or the beginning of the second; that he was a man of more than ordinary education and had

\* *Genuineness of the Gospels*, Cambridge, 1846, pp. 238-239.

traveled much. All these considerations serve to bring him into connection with the times of Papias, who wrote in the first quarter of the second century, and who records the testimony of John, the presbyter, as follows: "The presbyter said that Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, carefully wrote down all that he retained in memory of the actions or discourses of Christ; not, however, in order, for he was not himself a hearer or follower of the Lord, but, afterward, as I said, a companion of Peter, who taught in the manner best suited to the instruction of his hearers, without making a connected narrative of his discourses concerning the Lord. Such being the case, Mark committed no error in thus writing some things from memory; for he made it his sole object not to omit anything which he had heard, and not to state anything falsely." Of Matthew, Papias says: "Matthew wrote the Oracles in the Hebrew language: and every one interpreted them as he was able."\*

It seems that according to this testimony, although it is not necessary to establish my position, that the Gospel of Matthew and Mark were known before the time of Papias. Efforts have been made to discredit the statements of this

\* *Patrum Apostolorum Opera*, Lipsiae, 1878, part ii. pp. 92-93.

Church Father, because, while Eusebius speaks of his learning he sets a low estimate upon his intellectual abilities; this, however, would not unfit him for being a credible witness as to a question of fact. Nor is this testimony of Papias all. The Acts of the Apostles which, even according to the extremest German criticism as represented by the Tuebingen school were not written later than 110 B. C., but which must have been written much earlier, allude in the first chapter to the Gospel of Luke. As regards the Gospel of John, modern critics of the rationalistic school have been compelled to admit that it was written somewhere between 100 and 140 A. D., most of them placing it at 120 A. D. But Professor Abbot mentions the fact that John died about the year 100, and pointedly asks: "How could a spurious Gospel of a character so peculiar, so different from the earlier Synoptic Gospels, \* \* \* gain currency as the work of the Apostle, both among Christians and the Gnostic heretics, if it originated only twenty-five or thirty years after his death, when so many who must have known whether he wrote such a work or not were still living?"†

But, aside, from the testimony of Justin Martyr, Papias, and the author of the Acts, it is to be re-

† *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, Boston, 1880, p. 12.

membered that the first fifty years of the second century was a time of intellectual dearth. There were too many disturbing influences arising from persecutions and other causes to allow of its being a period of literary productiveness. The Apostolic Fathers were overshadowed by the Apostles. They felt and expressed their inferiority.

#### APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

Clement of Rome, who, according to the best authorities, composed an epistle to the Corinthians, between 93 and 97, A. D., writes simply as a mouthpiece of the Church of Rome, which is struggling on the same arena with that at Corinth, and bids them take up the epistle of the Apostle Paul, who wrote to them, as he affirms, under the inspiration of the Spirit.†

Moreover, Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John, in writing to the Philippians, disclaims all authority, and plainly says: "These things, brethren, I write to you, \* \* \* not because I take anything upon myself, but because you have invited me to do so. For neither I nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul."‡

We find similar expressions of humility in the epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, which was per-

† Compare vii, xlvii.

| iii.

haps written in the first quarter of the second century, where he makes this confession: "I do not as Peter and Paul issue commandments unto you. They were Apostles; I am but a condemned man."\* And Barnabas, who, according to many critics, wrote in the year 71, A. D., uses such expressions as these: "I further beg of you, as being one of you, and loving you both individually and collectively, more than my own soul;"† and again: "Now, being desirous to write many things to you, not as your teacher, but as becometh one who loves you," etc.‡ Men who expressed such sentiments as these, indicating the inferiority which they felt to the Apostles, could not be expected to fabricate Gospels and assign them to Matthew and John, of the Apostles, and to Mark and Luke, respectively, as companions of Peter and Paul. But then it must be remembered that Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Barnabas were the representative men of the early part of the second century. And if they, who were the leaders of the church, did not presume to arrogate apostolic authority to themselves, is it to be supposed that there were others of lower station and less influence who would write Gospels and

\* iv.

† i.

‡ iv.

attribute them to the Apostles and their trusted companion, and succeed in securing their reception by the Church at large?

But we are not shut up to these arguments. Our position is strengthened by a credible tradition. There were churches which were founded by Apostles. The Fathers of the last quarter of the second century affirm that these churches are witnesses, to the apostolic origin of the Gospels. Furthermore the tradition clearly indicates the four Evangelists as their authors.

#### THE ANTE NICENE FATHERS.

Origen, who was born about the year 185, and as a youth was remarkable for his learning, writes: "As I have learned from tradition concerning the four Gospels, which alone are undisputed in the Church of God under heaven, that the first in order of the Scripture is that according to Matthew, who was once a publican but afterward an Apostle of Jesus Christ. \* \* \* The second is that according to Mark, who wrote as Peter suggested to him. \* \* \* The third is that according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul. \* \* \* Last of all that according to John."§ In his commentary on the preface to Luke's Gospel, which begins, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand,"

§ Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, B. vi. 25.

etc., he makes the following interesting observation: "In this word of Luke's 'have taken in hand' there is a latent accusation of those who without the grace of the Holy Spirit have rushed to the composing of Gospels. Matthew, indeed, and Mark, and John, and Luke have not 'taken in hand' to write, but have written Gospels, being full of the Holy Spirit. \* \* \* The church has four Gospels; the heresies have many."

In like manner Tertullian of Carthage writes near the close of the second century: "We lay it down in the first place, that the evangelic document had for its authors Apostles, to whom this office of promulgating the Gospel was assigned by our Lord himself. And if some of them were companions of Apostles, yet they did not stand alone, but were connected with and guided by Apostles. \* \* \* Among the Apostles, John and Matthew form the faith within us. Among the companions of the Apostles, Luke and Mark renovate it."\*

So, too, Clement of Alexandria, who, as has been observed, was at the head of the catechetical school of that city, writing about the year 190 A. D., gives the tradition as follows:

"The Gospels containing the genealogies [i. e., Matthew's and Luke's] were written first. The following providence gave occasion to that of

\* *Adversus Marcionem*, iv. 2.

**Mark:** While Peter was publicly preaching the word at Rome, and through the power of the Spirit making known the Gospel, his hearers, who were numerous, exhorted Mark, upon the ground of his having accompanied him for a long time, and having his discourses in memory, to write down what he had spoken; and Mark, composing his Gospel, delivered it to those who made the request. \* \* \*

In the last place John, observing that the things obvious to the senses had been clearly set forth in those Gospels, being urged by his friends and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."†

We pass now across the Mediterranean and up the Rhone to Lyons, where, in 178, A. D., we find Irenæus, the successor of the aged Pothinus, who at the age of ninety sealed his testimony to the religion of Christ with his blood. Pothinus was connected with the apostolic age, being born about the year 87 A. D. Irenæus, therefore, as a bishop of the church at Lyons, was connected by a single link with the apostolic age. Moreover he had in his youth listened to the teachings of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. He was therefore doubly connected with that period. Hence the following tradition given by him is very weighty:

† Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, B. vi. 14.

"We," says Irenæus, "have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those through whom the Gospel has come down to us; which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards by the will of God transmitted to us in writing, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith. \* \* \* Matthew, among the Hebrews, published a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome and founding a church there. And after their departure [from life,] Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter himself, delivered to us in writing what Peter had preached; and Luke, the companion of Paul, recorded the Gospel preached by him. Afterward John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon his breast, likewise published a Gospel, whilst he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia."\*

Justin Martyr (147 A. D.) undoubtedly alludes to the same tradition when he speaks of "Memoirs composed by the Apostles of Christ and their companions,"† and Papias, as we have seen in the early part of the second century, mentions Mark as the interpreter of Peter, and Matthew, as having written the Oracles in the Hebrew language.

\* *Contra Haereses*, Lib. iii. 1.

† *Dialogue*, 103.

It is incredible, when we consider the substantial agreement of these traditions, and their well-nigh universal acceptance, that they should not be true; besides, Mr. Norton has argued with great force that it needed but a single link in the chain of succession to connect the old men of the time of Irenæus with the apostolic age. Such being the case, the Christians of his time could not be ignorant of the manner in which the Gospels had been regarded by their predecessors: and in his time the belief in the genuineness of the Gospels was established throughout the Christian community.†

#### REVIEW.

Let us in closing, for a moment review the ground over which we have passed. I have shown that notwithstanding the wide diffusion of the church in the last quarter of the second century, our Gospels alone were universally received as the ground and pillar of faith, and that although the lands where they were found were widely separated in race, customs, and language, still we have no

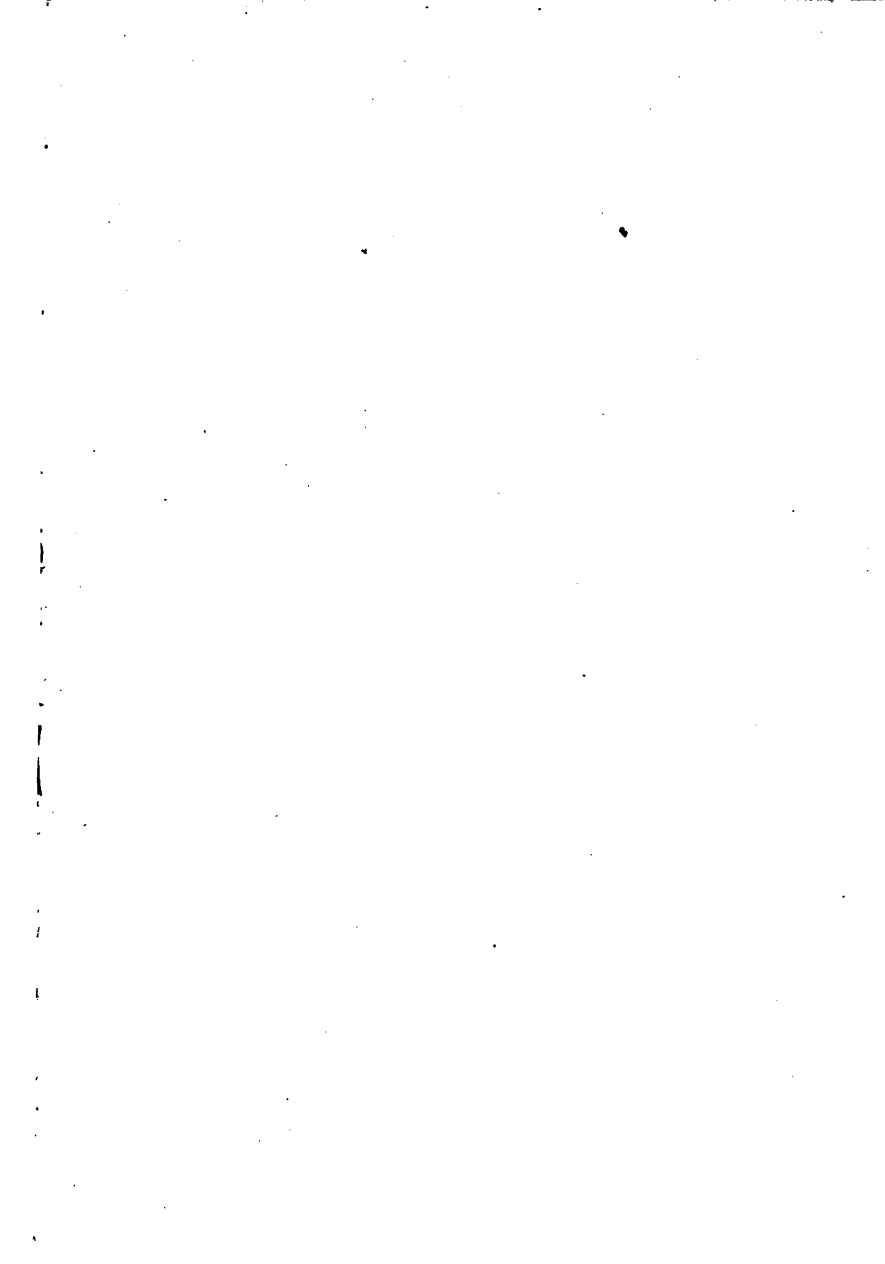
† It was my purpose in this discussion to show that our Gospels have come down to us essentially without interpolations. Even the exclusion of those few passages which have been proved with more or less certainty to be interpolations does not affect any doctrine.

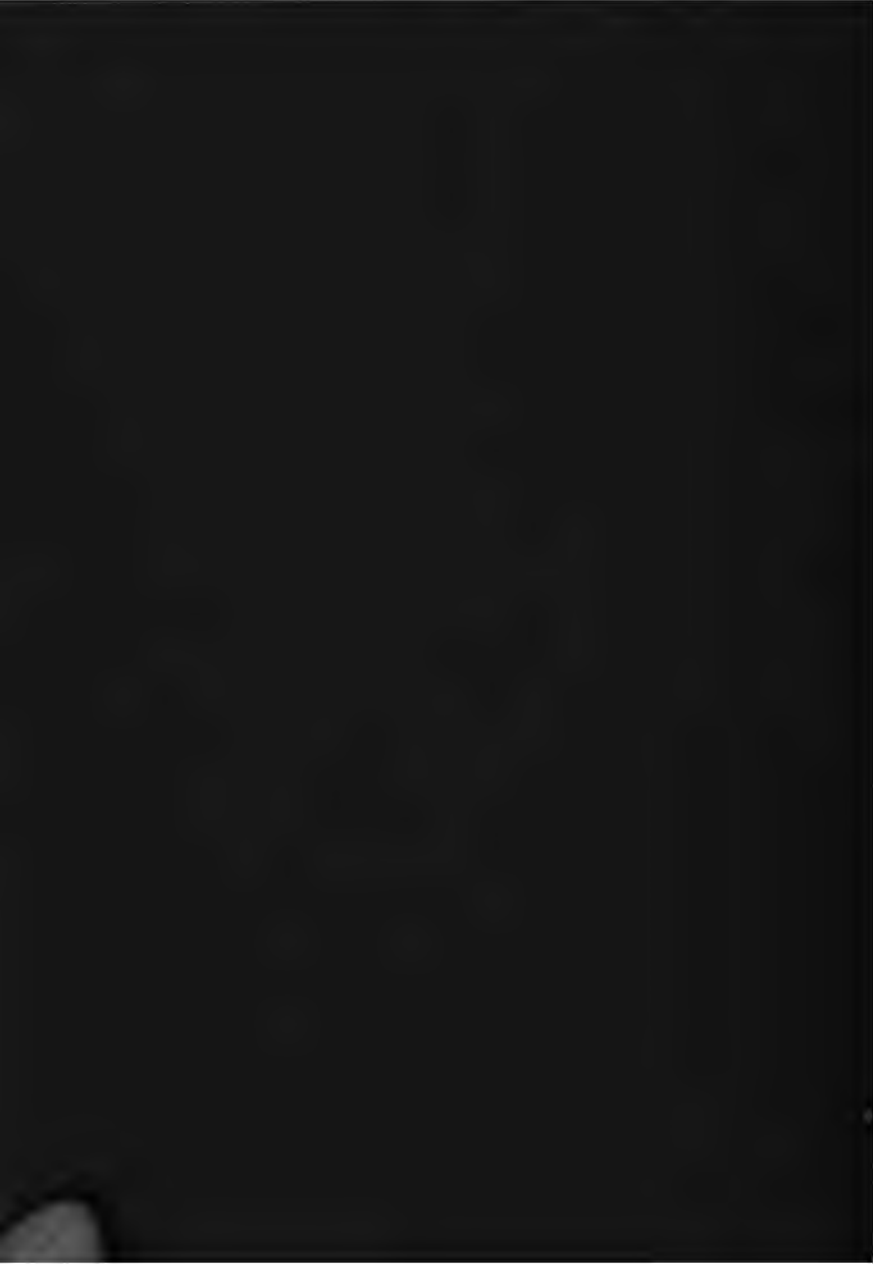
record of the introduction of our Gospels, and no evidence that they ever displaced other Gospels. And yet, since the origin and growth of Christianity presuppose certain historical facts, it is impossible, if Gospels had already been adopted by a church of martyrs, that they should have been resigned for new Gospels without a struggle, of which some trace must have come down to us. It has further been shown on critical grounds, as well as from analogy, that the Gospels mentioned by Justin Martyr in the year 147 A. D. were the same as those spoken of by Irenæus forty years later; that Papias in the first quarter of the second century doubtless alludes to two of our Gospels; and that it is not probable that the Apostolic Fathers, who lived at a period of great literary inactivity, and who disclaimed all apostolic authority, should have written Gospels which, by an unvarying tradition, are ascribed to the Apostles Matthew and John, and to the companions of Peter and Paul, namely, Mark and Luke.

I can only add that the arguments given in Norton's work on the *Genuineness of the Gospels*, to which I am indebted for the preparation of this discourse, seem to me, in the light of previous investigations, to be in the main unanswerable.

It is certain that the foundations of our faith,

so far as the Gospel record is concerned, have not been shaken, except among the uninformed, and in the imaginations of those who wish to believe a lie.







the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million (1990–1999) and is projected to increase by a further 1.5 million by 2010 (Office of National Statistics 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 2.5 million by 2020 (Office of National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for ageing, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the health and quality of life of older people. The strategy is based on the following principles: (1) to ensure that older people have access to the services they need; (2) to ensure that older people are able to live independently; (3) to ensure that older people are able to participate in the community; (4) to ensure that older people are able to live in their own homes; (5) to ensure that older people are able to live in a safe and secure environment; (6) to ensure that older people are able to live in a healthy and active environment; (7) to ensure that older people are able to live in a caring and supportive environment; (8) to ensure that older people are able to live in a peaceful and quiet environment; (9) to ensure that older people are able to live in a clean and tidy environment; (10) to ensure that older people are able to live in a safe and secure environment.

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